

Aggie Defensive Lineup Shows Battle Experience

Only Grady Allen was lost from last year's starting defensive team and Mike DeNiro latched onto the spot with tough, quick eagerness during the spring.

Experience in the battle arena should make the defense a mite better next fall.

All of the returning starters kept their positions during the spring but they can't afford to relax next fall because a group of young hopefuls are waiting in the wings to take over.

At the close of spring drills, DeNiro and Jim Piper were the ends, Rolf Krueger and Harvey Aschenbeck the tackles, Lynn Odom the middle guard, Ivan

Jones the rover, Bill Hobbs and Buster Adami the linebackers, Ross Brupbacher and Curley Hallman the halfbacks and Tommy Maxwell the safety. Hallman, out late with a pulled muscle, missed the spring game.

Behind them were senior lettermen Jerry Campbell and sophomore Roy Kirkpatrick at the ends, sophomores Dale Watts and Mike Tighe at the tackles, letterman Winston Beam at middle guard despite missing spring practice because of a knee operation, lettermen Leroy Hauerland and Lynn Fister at rover, sophomores Randy Maddox and Andy Tewell at linebackers, letterman

Jack Whitmore and sophomore Dave Elmendorf behind Brupbacher at one half and letterman Tom Sooy and squadman John Turney behind Hallman at the other. Letterman Arthur Cooley backs up Maxwell at safety.

Hobbs won all-America honors last year and was named the best lineman on the all-Bowl selections. Aschenbeck and Hallman also made the all-Bowl defensive unit. Krueger and Maxwell were all-SWC choices last year along with Hobbs.

Despite the many big plays of last year, the defense has room to improve on its fifth-place finish in per-game defensive averages in the conference.

Team Outlook For Fall '68

TOP PROSPECTS—There are a number of solid, proven football players, all of whom could improve in 1968. The 10 two-year starters, all of whom could qualify as candidates for A&M's top players, include Hargett, Housley, Long, Maxwell, Krueger, Hobbs, Aschenbeck, Buckman, Hallman and Jones. Others who are returning starters from last year's championship squad are Adami, Brupbacher, Piper, Odom, Stegent, Gough and Kovar.

TOP SOPHOMORES—On the basis of performances during spring training, DeNiro, Stallings, Parker and Fields would have to be grouped at the top because they were the only ones finishing on starting teams. But, there were others who were aggressive, dedicated and promising in the spring. They include Gruben, Lightfoot, Stinson, Reagan, Stansberry, Weaver, Black and Kelly on offense and Watts, Tighe, Kirkpatrick, Maddox, Tewell and Elmendorf on defense.

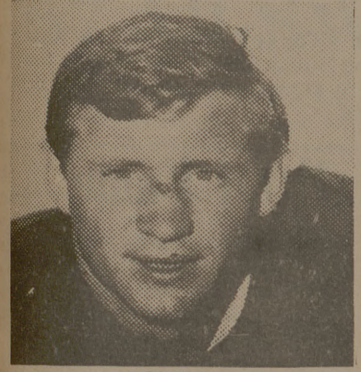
POSITION CHANGES—Among returning varsity players, there were very few. Caswell moved from center to weak tackle and Stallings, a redshirt, also moved from center to weak guard. Some of the sophomores-to-be were shifted from spots they played as freshmen.

KICKING—Punter Steve O'Neal, a quality kicker, carries splendid credentials into his senior season. As a sophomore he averaged 42.3 yards on 81 punts. Place-kicker Charlie Riggs booted 15 of 18 extra points last year and made good on 8 of 10 field goal attempts.

PASSING—Hargett is among the top passers in the nation. He holds virtually all of A&M's school records for passing.

RECEIVING—Experienced and adequate. Stegent, Long, Maxwell, Buckman, Harris, Housley and Adams last year combined for 93 catches for 1,482 yards and 15 touchdowns.

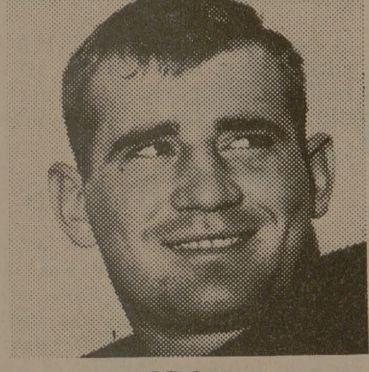
RUNNING—Stegent and Housley are quality runners but their ultimate success may depend largely on the development of adequate blocking in the offensive line.



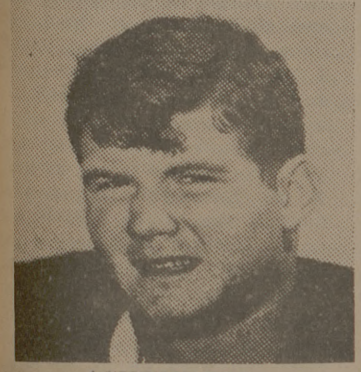
PIPER



KRUGER



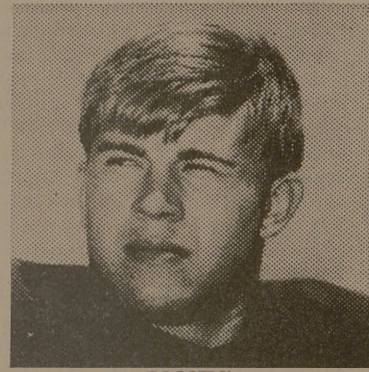
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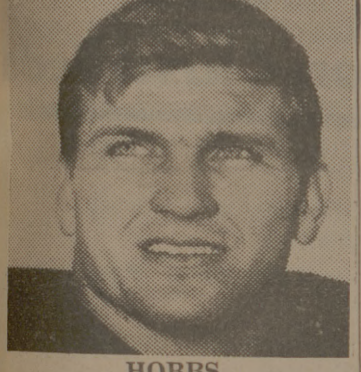
ASHENBECK



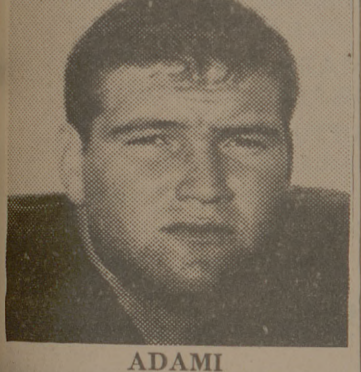
DeNIRO



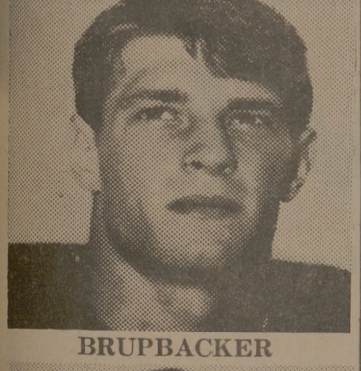
JONES



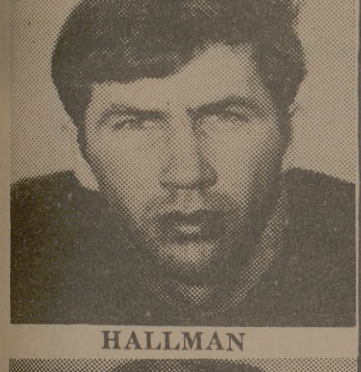
HOBBS



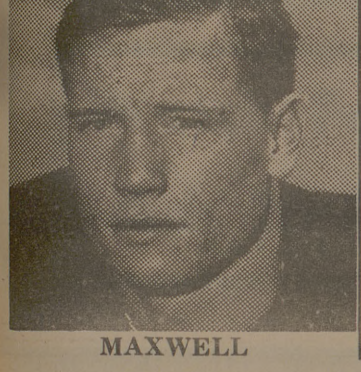
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